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SUBJECT: Iraqi Kurdistan Region Media Summary --
February 5, 2007

11. (U) This is a Regional Reconstruction Team (RRT) cable.

Sulaimaniyah to Give Fuel to Owners of 300 Private Generators

12. (U) Kurdistan New reports that the Sulaimaniyah provincial government will supply 50% of the diesel fuel and electrical cables needed to run 300 private electricity generators in the city.

President Masoud Barzani is factor of unity in Iraq

13. (U) Khabat newspaper reports on a speech given by Nassar al-Ruba'i, head of al-Sadr faction of the Iraqi National Assembly, following his visit to the Kurdistan Region last week. In the speech al-Ruba'i said, "President Massoud Barzani and the KDP are playing a positive role in bringing Iraqi political factions and ethnic groups together. We have discussed the new security plan with him."

GOI Article 140 Committee Approves Plan to Relocate "Arabs of Arabization"

14. (U) GOI Minister of Interior Dr. Hashim al-Shibli and KRG Minister for Extra-Regional Affairs Dr. Muhammad Ihsan led a meeting of the GOI Higher Committee for the Implementation of Article 140 to discuss a plan to relocate "Arabs of Arabization" in Kirkuk to their original homes. The committee approved two resolutions. In Resolution #3, it specifies that the families will be relocated to the areas they came from, they will be paid 20 million Iraqi Dinars, each family will be given a piece of land in the areas where they are relocated, and all official government registrations (including food ration cards) must be transferred to the new home. Relocated Arabs who are currently government employees will be guaranteed a government job at their new homes.

15. (U) In Resolution #4, it specifies that contracts for agricultural land currently held by "Arabs of Arabization" will be terminated. The two resolutions are set to be put into effect on March 15 if they are approved by Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki.

KRG Representative to U. S. Speaks to Congress

16. (U) Major newspapers reported that KRG Representative to the United States, Qubad Talabani, spoke to the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee. He said the Kurdistan Region would need a guarantee from the United States if it pulls out of Iraq. He said that the referendum on Kirkuk should be held by the end of 2007 because "postponing the referendum will develop tensions in the area."

¶7. (U) Peyamner, the Kurdish News Agency, reported that following the statement of President Masoud Barzani opposing any changes in the Kurdish National Anthem, the head of KDP faction in KNA, Sherwan Haidari, told them, "There is a draft of law in the KNA to make 'Ay Raqib' the new Kurdish National Anthem".

Former Congressman Tom Downey Interview with Khabat

¶8. (U) Former Democratic Congressman from New York Tom Downey gave an interview with Khabat newspaper. In the interview he said, "Three regions is the best solution for Iraq because Iraq contains many different nations and ethnicities." He said he doesn't support the pull back of American troops from Iraq.

Commentaries:

¶9. (U) Kawa Ameen writes a commentary about the refugees at the UNHCR-run refugee camp in Makhmour. He says that the people in the camp are Kurdish people and have been made to be immigrants in their own land. He says that UNHCR, the KRG, and the Iraqi government have ignored the problem and failed to give the people of the camp any humanitarian aid. Turkey accuses the camp of being a military base for training PKK fighters, but this is not true. This is proven when a few days ago the Iraqi forces, supervised by the American forces, blockaded the camp on a search for weapons and they didn't find any. So now that all the rumors have been proven false, he says, "it is time for all concerned sides to apologize to those people. UNHCR and the KRG should give all the people in the camp asylum...and allow them the freedom to travel freely and look for jobs in southern Kurdistan cities." He cites the example of

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Sweeden, where refugees can become citizens after some period of time.

¶10. (SBU) This media summary is prepared by Public Diplomacy Assistant Tawar Rasheed.